The Government in consultation with various stakeholders is examining the recommendations of the Task Force. Based on this a new Pharmaceutical Policy is likely to be announced shortly.

Losses of Railways

*56. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI RAASHID ALVI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have lost nearly Rs. 2000 crores over the delay in using recycled scrap to manufacture wheels;

(b) whether during 2004-05 Budget it had been promised that 1 million tonnes of scrap that is generated each year would no longer be sold but would be recycled to make wheels in the factory;

(c) whether due to non-implementation of this decision Railways have incurred a loss of Rs. 2000 crores; and

(d) if so, the main reasons for delay and what time a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, the Budget pronouncement expressed concern about mal-practices in scrap sales. Therefore, it was decided to explore the possibilities of in-house utilization of scrap by recycling it, instead of selling it to outside parties, subject to detailed examination of the logistics, cost benefit analysis etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Research on elimination of pesticides

*57. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware the farmers in Penta Srirampuram in Andhra Pradesh have managed to eliminate pesticides from their rice crop by following a three-step procedure as evolved by their agricultural officer;

(b) if so, whether this innovative method will be studied by the agricultural scientists of ICAR with a view to ensuring its application on a selective basis depending upon soil; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) ICAR has been already involved in the development of location specific Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques in rice. The method advocated to rice farmers involves: (i) application of organic manure, (ii) early sowing and timely planting, (iii) use of recommended nitrogen fertilizer, (iv) timely pruning of field bunds and (v) delayed pesticide application in the crop to encourage build-up of natural enemies and encourage natural suppression of the early season pests. This method is recommended Integrated Pest Management that the ICAR scientists have developed over a period of research on the rice varieties that are released from time to time. Integrated Pest Management in rice aims at reduction in use of pesticides. On-farm validation ... the IPM practices and Frontline Demostrations are also carried out to ... for the cost effective rice production technology to the farmers. On-farm validation of IPM Technology is undertaken under All India Co-ordination Rice Improvement Programme of Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad.

Shortage of onion/wheat production

*58. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of onion/wheat in the country is expected to be less than the target during 2005-06;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for this shortfall;

(c) whether Government propose to import onion/wheat this year in order to meet the shortage; and

(d) if so, the details thereof country-wise and quantity-wise and the total expenditure likely to be involved therein during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARD PAWAR): (a) and (b) For the year 2005-06, the production target of wheat is fixed at 75.53 million tonnes. As per the available reports for the Crop Weather Watch